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WHAT IS MEN'S HEALTH? A DEFINITION

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Summary

Target of the study

Men's Health is increasingly coming into force within health research, epidemiology, health care organisation, and health policy. Over the past 10-15 years the EU Men's Health Report and reports within some countries have publicised problems of health in men. A starting point for the study of men's health is the definition of "Men's Health". A group of German experts in the field of men's health has taken on this task.

Methodology

A literature review in international and national databases was performed for the years 1990-2014 by selected MeSH terms and for "experts in men's health". Further research concerned "grey literature" in Germany, especially health reports and web pages. This was followed by a conference of experts to define "Men's Health" using a modified Delphi method according to W. Zinn. From the expert group, minimum criteria for a definition of "Men's Health", which must comply with the new definition of men's health, were created and discussed. The final definition was created in the third round of the Delphi method.

Results

The international literature review yielded seven definitions of "Men's Health" in the English literature and five definitions in the German literature including within the "grey" literature. The expert group identified seven minimum criteria and fifteen relevant topics that were needed for a strong definition, of which, by weighting, eight criteria were considered relevant for a new definition. None of the existing definitions could fulfil these eight criteria. Therefore, in the next step of the expert group a new definition "Men's Health" was elaborated. The definition has reference to the WHO concept of "health" and includes dimensions of health and disease, risk and protective factors that require special prevention and care services for all phases of life. All participants in the expert group agreed on the definition developed.

Conclusions

The definition of Men's Health is a basis for further research and practice to improve men's health in Germany and other countries.

INTRODUCTION

In 2004, Alan White wrote in the editorial of the newly founded *Journal of Men's Health and Gender* that men's health is a growing problem with increasing academic and clinical interest [1]. Over the last 10-20 years definitions of men's health have been developed, with it soon becoming clear that a definition should contain more than male specific diseases [1]. The first known definition of men's health was within Australia in 1997 by Robert Fletcher and largely related to male-specific diseases, risk factors and interventions [2]. An important step forward in 2004 was the definition produced by the Men's Health Forum from England, which is anchored in the document "Getting it sorted: a policy program for men's health" and included physical, psychological, social and environmental factors in the definition men's health [3].

Nevertheless, in 2007 Porche, based on his impression review of existing definitions, wrote in the editorial of the newly founded American Journal of Men's Health: "There are no clear and consistent definitions of what constitutes men's health"[4]. The proposal by Porche includes a holistic and comprehensive approach including psychological, mental, emotional, social and spiritual life experiences and the needs of men in all stages of life [5].

Why are several countries currently striving to identify men's health? James A Smith from Australia identified in 2007 that the absence of a generally accepted definition of men's health is problematic for the establishment of a state and federal men's health policy. It is also about the question of how men see their health and how this relates to their use of health services from a public health perspective [6].

In Australia and Ireland there are now men-related health programs and policies [7], (since the publication of the original paper Brazil has now also produced a men's health policy). Within the Irish strategy document, they have recognised that men's health is as much about male socialisation as it is of their biology (7, p. 425): "It is against particular norms of masculine behaviour that men must constantly negotiate their own behaviour in relation to how they manage their health."

In recent years, men's health reports have been published for Germany [8; 9; 10], Denmark [32],

Ireland [33], for Europe [11], Asia [12] and soon to the US. Some of these reports include a definition of men's health. In the past two years, men's health was established in the United States by several activities: "Foundation of Men's Health (USA)" was established, the management of the "International Society of Men's Health (ISMH)" was transferred from Austria to USA; the "American Urological Association (AUA)" has taken a keen interest in men's health and the "American Society of Men's Health" was founded. The "International Consultation on Urological Diseases in Men's Health and Infertility Men's Health Initiative" (ICUD-MHI) is also helping to develop the understanding of Men's Health in the US. Such that there is already a strong base in which to create a definition of men's health in the United States [13].

Creating the first definition for Men's Health in Germany was initiated by the Foundation Men's Health, Berlin, this was replaced in 2006 with a more current definition which was adapted to make it more suitable for health strategy formation.

Men's Health also gradually came into the focus of German health policy. In the analysis of Germany's population's health there is currently a difference of 5 years for life expectancy to the detriment of men. The analysis of the health situation of men and women shows some similarities, but on the other hand there appears to be gendered patterns of morbidity structure, behaviour, risk factors and the impact on health within different socio-demographic groups.

In 1946, the World Health Organisation (WHO) defined health as "...a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" [14] and this serves as the basis for a definition of men's health. The WHO definition is a statement of principle, but the WHO definition is not gender-specific. Our current knowledge about differences in the health status of men and women requires a gender perspective and therefore specific definitions of "Men's Health" and "Women's Health".

The aims of this publication are to analyse the present international and national definitions of Men's Health, and to adapt and develop existing definitions of Men's Health to create a research based definition of men's health and to stimulate discussion.

The publication attempted to answer the following questions:

- a) What criteria should satisfy a definition of men's health?
- b) Is the adaptation of health care to male behaviour patterns a part of defining men's health?

METHODOLOGY

The study comprised a comprehensive literature search in international and national databases and "grey literature" in the German language. In addition, an expert group was consulted to help find definitions using the Delphi method.

International Literature Review

The international literature review was conducted with PubMed (English), using appropriate MeSH terms *

Footnote (* Proposal of MeSH terms from the MeSH senior analyst Dan Cho, Ph.D. of the National Library, National Institute of Health)

The following MeSH terms were used for the PubMed search of the years 1990-2014:

1. Men's health AND 1990-2014
2. Gender Identity AND 1990-2014
3. Men's health AND gender AND 1990-2014

Additionally, the following terms were used to focus the search and to reduce the number of hits

- Defini * AND Gender identity AND Men's health AND 1990-2014
- Men's health AND Gender identity AND 1990-2014
- "Men's health defini *" AND Gender identity AND 1990-2014

Other queries related to an international author research, which included the following recognised experts for men's health:

- Prof. Dr. Demetrius Porche J: Founder of the American Journal of Men's Health in 2007 and the Chief Editor of this journal
- Dr. Richard Fletcher: Fathers and Families Research Program. Family Action Centre, Faculty of Health, the University of Newcastle; Australia

- James A Smith: Department of Paramedic & Social Health Sciences, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia
- Dr. Noel Richardson: Director of the Centre for Men's Health at the Institute of Technology Carlow and the editor of the first National Policy on Men's Health, Ireland, 2008-2013.
- Professor Alan White: Director of the Centre for Men's Health. Institute for Health and Wellbeing, Faculty of Health and Social Sciences. Beckett Leeds University, UK. Chairman of the Global Committee "Unmet Needs in Men's Health". Main editor of the "European State of Men's Health Report 2011".
- Prof. Dr. Ridwan Shabsigh: US Dept. of Surgery at St. Barnabas Hospital, Professor of Urology at Cornell University in New York. Editor of the Journal of Men's Health, US. Member of the Editorial Committee "Unmet Needs in Men's Health", USA. The President of the International Society of Men's Health
- Prof. Dr. Tan Hui Meng: Medical and Education Development Department, Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Subang Jaya Medical Centre, Subang Jaya, Malaysia, Main editor of the Asian Men's Health Report 2013 Malaysian Men's Health Initiative of the Malaysian Society of Andrology and the Study of the Aging Male (MSASAM). University of Malaya, Malaysia
- Prof. Dr. Larry Goldenberg, Canada, British Columbia, Head of the Department of Urologic Sciences, University of British Columbia, Vancouver; Member of the Committee "Unmet Needs in Men's Health", Canada

Further research related to the WHO, the Men's Health Forum in the UK (men-shealthforum.org.uk), the European Men's Health Forum (emhf.org), the Website of the International Society of Men's Health (www.ismh.org) and the web page of the American Society of Men's Health (www.asmhnet.org).

NATIONAL LITERATURE SEARCH

For the German-language literature search: "Definition Men's Health" was used as the search term in Google, Google Scholar, on the website of the Federal

Ministry of Health, at the BZgA in Wikipedia and in the database DIMDI.

Expert Conference to Define “Men’s Health” using a Modified Delphi Method

To formulate the definition a modified Delphi method was used. The Delphi method is traditionally carried out exclusively by correspondence [15], however in this instance the method used a combination of individual written material with the subsequent group discussion.

The experts from the First and Second Men’s Health reports of the Foundation of Men’s Health, Berlin, and members of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Foundation Men’s Health participated in the group discussion alongside Prof. Zinn who led the modified Delphi method (see acknowledgements with list of experts).

In the first round, each expert wrote down what they considered to be the minimum criteria for which the newly developed definition must comply with.

The minimum criteria were then discussed within the group and the experts agreed on seven minimum criteria that a new definition of Men’s Health must meet.

The critical review of existing definitions showed that none satisfied these seven criteria.

In the second round, each expert wrote down topics/issues which they deemed relevant to the definition and these were subsequently discussed within the group. Overlaps were filtered, ambiguities were clarified and each topic/issue was weighted by the experts to filter out irrelevant contents. Each participant had to award five points across the topics/issues, with a maximum award of two points per topic allowed. Those which received four or more points were selected as inclusion criteria for the definition; whilst those that received three or less points were excluded from the integration in the definition.

In the third round a joint formulation was gradually developed, taking into account the agreed minimum criteria from the earlier rounds. The formulation was carried out in an interactive group process in which the proposed wording of the text was continuously shared between the participants and worked and reworked.

In the last round, the definition text was handed over to the experts for final corrections and was

consensually accepted by the expert group. The final version of the definition was published in German and English on the website of the Foundation Men’s Health, Berlin.

RESULTS

Results of the International Literature Search

The International (English language) literature search yielded five results for the PubMed search and research in other databases and sources (Table 1).

Results of the National German Literature Search

The German-language literature search yielded one hit on Google and two hits on Wikipedia. The expert literature search yielded no results (Table 2)

INTERNATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF MEN’S HEALTH AS A RESULT OF THE LITERATURE SEARCH

One of the first definitions of men’s health comes from Australia, New South Wales State, Newcastle University in the year 1997 [2]. Richard Fletcher was involved in the “Men’s and Boy’s Project” of the Family Action Centre, University of Newcastle. He tried to include a definition that was wider than just those related exclusively to the male anatomy [2].

1. Definition of Men’s Health (Australia)

Richard Fletcher used the following definition and published it in 1997 as a working definition of Men’s Health [2]:

“A men’s health issue is a disease or condition unique to men, more prevalent in men, more serious among men, for which risk factors are different for men or for which different interventions are required for men.”

(1. Definition Men’s Health)

The background of the first definition of Men’s Health was the US-definition of women’s health, which was created as part of the Action Plan for Women’s Health (1991). The original definition of women’s health was:

“A women’s health issue is a disease or condition unique to women, more prevalent in women, more serious among women, for which risk factors are different for women and for which interventions are different for women” [2].

What is Men's Health?

TABLE 1 Results of the International Literature Search on 3 MeSH Terms to “Definition of Men’s Health” (November 2014)

Database / source	Search term	Hits	Restriction of terms	Hits	Assessment / result
WHO	“men’s health”	1,010	“definition” “men’s health”	845	no definition in five selected publications
	“men’s health”	1,040	“definition” and “male health”	19	inappropriate
European Union	“men’s health”	1,139	not possible		
	“Männergesundheit”	0			
Google	“European Union” and definition and “men’s health”	1,280,000	browse the first listed publications		1 definition (The State of Men’s Health Report, 2011)
Men’s Health Forum	“men’s health” “definition”	4			1 definition (Getting it sorted – a policy paper for men’s health, 2004)
European Men’s health forum	no mask	-	browse of three relevant publications		1 definition (Men’s Health around the world, 2009)
International Society of Men’s Health	“men’s health” “definition”	0			inappropriate
American Society of Men’s Health	“men’s health” “definition”	0			inappropriate
PubMed	“gender identity” AND “1990-2014”	257	“men’s health”	8	inappropriate
	“men’s health” AND “1990-2014”	2,128	“men’s health” AND “definition”	22	inappropriate
	“male health” AND “1990-2014”	388	“male health” AND “definition”	2	inappropriate
Men’s and Boy’s Project Australia					1 definition (Report on men’s health services, 2001)
Malaysian Men’s Health Initiative					1 definition (Asian Men’s Health Report, 2013)

Robert Fletcher added to the definition of men's health the terms "health status" and "health care" because he saw a connection. Therefore, he added to the definition the term "Men's Health Service" with three main areas [4]:

- i. Address men's health issues
- ii. Pay particular attention to targeting males, engaging males or treating males
- iii. Incorporate an acknowledgement that existing services, whatever their merits, require a fresh approach to males' health, in order to improve males' health status.

Compared to other countries, Australia is thus the pioneer in the development of the concepts of men's health and health care for men [4].

2. Definition of Men's Health (UK)

Similarly, the Men's Health Forum of England (2004) described Men's Health [3; 1]:

"A male health issue is one arising from physiological, psychological, social, cultural or environmental factors that have a specific impact on boys or men and / or in which interventions are required to achieve improvements in health and well-being at either the individual or population level." (2. Definition Men's Health)

3. Definition of Men's Health (USA)

Porche & Willis added the context of the living conditions to the last definition: the influence of the family, the home environment, the society, institutions and the environment [5]. Porche and Willis defined Men's Health as follows:

"Men's Health is a holistic and comprehensive approach that addresses the physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual life experiences and needs of men throughout their life spans" [5].

(3. Definition Men's Health)

4. Definition of Men's Health (Ireland)

Ireland published the first program within Europe of a National Men's Health Policy for the years 2008-2013 [16]. Men's Health is defined in this program as follows:

Defining "men's health": A healthy man is one, who is empowered to experience optimum physical,

mental and social well-being and who experiences health as a resource for everyday living "[16; p.16].

(4. Definition Men's Health)

5. Definition of Men's Health (Canada)

In 2010, the Men's Health Initiative of British Columbia, Canada, created a road-map for men's health, which included proposals for improving health outcomes and health care and included a working definition for men's health [17]:

"The working definition of Men's Health is the study of conditions or diseases, risk factors and treatments, that are specific to males across their lifespan within the context of their physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being" [16; p. 21].

(5. Definition Men's Health)

6. Definition of Men's Health (Malaysia)

The Asian Men's Health Report, which was released in late 2013 by the Malaysian Men's Health Initiative, defined Men's Health as follows [12]:

"Men's Health is a discipline that promotes physical, mental and social well-being of men throughout their life cycle (from boyhood to manhood) and addressing health problems related to men. A multidisciplinary approach using male-specific intervention is required to improve the quality of life and life expectancy of men, both individually and as a population, which in turn improves men's health"[12].

(6. Definition Men's Health)

7. Definition of Men's Health (USA)

The International Society of Men's Health (ISMH) and the Foundation of Men's Health, US, adopted the following definition of Men's Health in 2013, which was drafted by Ridwan Shabsigh [13]:

"Men's health includes:

- (1) Male gender-specific diseases and conditions related to the male anatomy, such as prostate diseases, male sexual dysfunctions, male hypogonadism, and testicular and scrotal diseases;
- (2) Non gender-specific diseases and conditions with higher prevalence or special impact in men, such as cardiovascular disease; metabolic syndrome; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; cancer of the lung, colon, bladder, and liver; and schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and suicide;

- (3) Behaviours that are more common in men and impose health risks, such as smoking, substance abuse, violence, and low utilisation on health services; and
- (4) Social situations, involving a majority of men, that may have a negative impact on their health, such as the armed forces, wars, incarceration, construction, mining and shipping industries”

[13]. (7. Definition Men's Health)

ASSESSMENT

The extensive international literature search highlighted seven definitions for the term Men's Health, which had been created between 1997 and 2013. The first definition was written in Australia in 1997. Accordingly, Australia is the pioneer in the development of the definition “Men's Health” and “Health Care for men”. The seven definitions given for men's health are evidence of the development of men's health policy, especially in English-speaking countries (Australia, UK, Ireland, Canada, Malaysia (Asia) and USA). The definition changed throughout this period from a definition which was dominated by men-specific diseases and risk factors, towards a definition that also integrated the social situation and living conditions of men.

The definition of the Men's Health Forum of England from the year 2004 (definition 2) has proven to be very practical. This definition is applied to the Men's Health Report of the European Union (2011) in the same text [11]. The definition of the Men's Health Forum of England serves as the basis for the world's first program of a national men's health policy for the years 2008-2013 for Ireland. A friendly global definition of men's health does not yet exist.

In three countries, aspects of male-specific health care are included in the definition: in Australia (definition 1), in Canada (definition 5) and in USA (definition 7). In four countries the aspect of medical care is not mentioned as part of the definition of men's health: England (definition 2), USA, 2004 (definition 3), Ireland (definition 4), Malaysia (definition 6). Ireland considers male-specific health care as part of the strategy and men's health policy, but not as part of the definition.

In Australia, the male-specific health care counts both as part of the definition as well as the male specific policy strategy of the country.

DEFINITIONS FOR MEN'S HEALTH IN GERMAN PUBLICATIONS

The German-language literature search on definitions “Männergesundheit” (English: Men's Health”) was made in databases such as Google, Google Scholar, the DIMDI (German Institute of Medical Documentation and Information) databases and in “grey literature” (Table 2).

1. German Definition of Men's Health

The Men's Health Foundation, founded in 2006, defined men's health on their website and published it in the 2013 *Men's Health Report* [9; p. 7)

The definition was:

“Health means something different for every man: fit and young, mobile and pain-free, physically and mentally unrestricted for work and leisure. But in addition to individual wishes, our environment is also a determining factor for what “health” means: Doctors and health insurance companies, media and opinion leaders, family and partners”[9].

(1. German definition Men's Health)

This definition has been superseded from the website of the Men's health foundation Berlin at end of April 2013 by the newly created definition.

2. German Definition of Men's Health

In Lichtenberger (Berlin district) the 2011 Men's Health Report defined Men's health as follows [18]:

“Men's health is influenced by male lifestyle and habit, by socio-structural influences on men's health and is influenced by societal conditions and expectations. Male behaviour and male health will be decided at the individual level (everyday life) and the social level (milieu specific men's health).”

(2. German definition Men's Health)

The Lichtenberger Men's Health report has no ISBN number, and therefore does not appear in databases. The report belongs to the “grey literature”.

3. German Definition of Men's Health

The original definition of “Preventological Counselling and Coaching” based in Wuppertal, led by

Wiggershaus-Skriboleit, Wuppertal (www.praeventologie.eu) by 2012 was [19]:

“Men’s health is characterised by a positive health concept with a higher value of physical dimensions and performance, while the psychological well-being takes a lower priority. Important personal resources of men include high self-esteem, sense of physical strength and resilience as well as the attribution of own skills for coping with psychological and social stress. Family relationships or partners are considered an important social resource. “

(3 German definition Men’s Health) (www.praeventologie.eu/gesundheit-s69 (download 26/09/2012)

4. German Definition of Men’s Health

From 2012 to 2013 “Preventological Counselling and Coaching” published the following definition on its website [20], which has been deleted [21]:

“The concept of men’s health addresses those aspects of health and disease, which are particularly relevant for men and boys. Men often show behaviours and lifestyles that increase the risk of injury,

diseases or death, and they die statistically earlier than women”[12].

(4. German definition Men’s Health)

(www.praeventologie.eu/gesundheit-s69 (download 11.04.2013))

5. GERMAN DEFINITION OF MEN’S HEALTH

On the website of Wikipedia, there is the following definition of Men’s health, which was published after the year 2007 [22]:

“Men’s health means the physical, mental and social health of boys and men of all ages. Men’s health covers all public and private areas such as family, education, everyday life, kindergarten and school, youth work, politics or the world of work. Men’s health is defined and is distinguished by

- 1.) Specific physical organs, (penis, testicles, prostate, etc.)
- 2.) Specific social and cultural conditions of growing up and life implementation of boys and men (being a boy, being a man) and (partly as a result)

TABLE 2 Overview of the Literature Search on German Literature

Database/source	Search term	Hits	Expansion/restriction of terms	Hits	Assessment/result
Google	“Definition Männergesundheit”	51,000	“Definition Männergesundheit“	10	1 definition
Wikipedia	“Definition Männergesundheit”	5	no		2 definitions
DIMDI Databases	“Männergesundheit”	1,075	“Definition Männergesundheit”	17	no definition
Google scholar	“Männergesundheit”	981	Definition Männergesundheit	375	no definition
Google scholar	Definition Männergesundheit	375	“Definition Männergesundheit“	1	no definition
Federal Ministry of Health (BMG)	“Männergesundheit”	53	“Definition Männergesundheit”	4	no definition
Federal Center for Health Education (BZgA)	“Männergesundheit”	21	“Definition Männergesundheit”	21	no definition
Prävento-login Gesundheits Coach G. J. Wiggershaus-Skriboleit	“Männergesundheit”	0	“Definition Männergesundheit”	0	No definition

- 3.) Gender-related specific handling of health (images of masculinity and femininity)”

(5. German definition Men's Health).

ASSESSMENT

In Germany until 2013, three definitions of “Men's Health” were found in Men's-Health Reports and in the “grey” literature: the original Men's Health definition of the Foundation Men's Health from 2006 to 2013, the Definition of the Lichtenberger Health Report from the year 2011 and the definition of the website of Wikipedia. Two definitions of Gudrun J. Wiggershaus-Skriboleit have been removed in the meantime from the website of “Preventological Counselling and Coaching” based in Wuppertal, associated with a change in form and content design of the website [19-21].

The literature search revealed that at present four of the five definitions listed are not used in Germany. Consequently, only the definition of Men's Health at the website of Wikipedia is used and additionally the definition newly created by the Foundation Men's Health Berlin from the year 2013. As a result of the DIMDI research in German journals no definitions for Men's Health in Germany could be found.

THE WAY TO DEFINE MEN'S HEALTH BY THE FOUNDATION MEN'S HEALTH BERLIN

The formulation of the definition was carried out using the modified Delphi method, which has already been described above.

In the first round, each expert submitted the following minimum criteria for the definition to be developed:

1. The WHO definition of “Health” should be the basis for the definition of men's health;
2. The salutogenic concept of Antonovsky should be emphasised;
3. Integration of the balance between risk and protective factors;
4. Strengths and weaknesses of men to be included in the definition;
5. To take account of joy of life and personal recognition;
6. To integrate social background and social support;

7. To accommodate specific requirements for preventive measures and health care supply.

The collection of topics in the second round resulted in the following 15 topics:

1. Attentiveness to one's health
2. Healthy lifestyle
3. Acceptance of one's own weaknesses
4. Personal health activities
5. Sense experience and joy of life
6. Health focus: salutogenesis
7. Social class (belonging to a social class)
8. Acceptance how I am as a man
9. Refer to diseases
10. Harmony of opportunities and objectives
11. Belonging to ethnic groups
12. Western European context
13. Man's social esteem
14. Men's and boy's specificity
15. International context

The subsequent weighting reduced the 15 topics to 8 topics:

1. Attentiveness to one's health (7 points)
2. Healthy lifestyle (7 points)
3. Acceptance of one's own weaknesses (6 points)
4. Personal health activities (5 points)
5. Sense experience and joy of life (5 points)
6. Health focus: salutogenesis (5 points)
7. Social class (belonging to a social class) (5 points)
8. Acceptance how I am as a man (4 points)

Other terms such as “The harmony of opportunities and objectives”, “Refer to diseases”, “Belonging to ethnic groups”, “Western European context”, “Man's social esteem”, “Men's and boy's - specificity” and “International context” only received 1 to 2 points and were therefore not taken into account.

In the third round the definition of men's health was gradually formulated.

DEFINITION - MEN'S HEALTH EXPERT GROUP, BERLIN, APRIL 24, 2013

“Men's health encompasses the dimensions of health and diseases, which are particularly relevant for men and boys. Health is a state of physical, mental and social well-being resulting from a balance of risk

and protective factors, which is the responsibility of the individual, the partners, as well as being a collective responsibility.

Protective factors are a healthy and conscientious lifestyle, accepting one's strengths but also weaknesses as a man, meaningful experience and zest for life, social support and personal recognition.

In particular, men suffer from an unequal distribution of risk and protective factors, determined by education, ethnic and social background, income and professional position. Health problems in men require special preventive and care services throughout life, which for the most part still need to be developed" [23, the Foundation's website].

In the next classic written round all the experts received the text and were able to incorporate last minute changes. As all the participants agreed the text the process was deemed to have reached a successful conclusion.

DISCUSSION

Substantiation of the Content Issues of the Definition of the Term "Men's Health"

The image of men's health has been mostly negatively over the last 10 to 20 years. Lower life expectancy; higher premature mortality (0–64 years); lower utilisation of physicians and hospital services, especially lower use of preventive services; and too little attention to their own body and health gave men a bad health image. This negative image of men's health proved to be a disadvantage for the development of health policies [24]. In Ireland's health strategy noted that men needed to challenge the way they lived their lives if they wanted to improve their health ("It is against particular norms of masculine behaviour that men must constantly negotiate their own behaviour in relation to how they manage their health") [7]. A constructive way forward was needed [24].

The WHO definition of health is not based on negative assessments of the health-related situation, but from a long-term objective of health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of symptoms and disease (WHO, 1946 [14]). This objective generally applies to men and women, but it is obvious that the health

status and health needs of men and women are partly different. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the gender differences in specific conceptual definitions for women's and men's health.

The international definition findings show that the first definition of men's health was derived almost twenty years ago from the definition of "Women's Health". Over the past ten years there have been attempts in several countries to formulate specific definitions of men's health. The stronger the movement to "men's health" is in the world, the more important an internationally agreed definition of men's health will be [31]. The WHO-definition of health and the definition of the Men's Health Forum (England) that the EU health report "State of Men's Health in Europe" is based upon, [11, 3] already meets many aspects of a salutogenic and male-specific approach.

The reference to specific diseases or behaviour was deliberately omitted from the definition developed by the German group of experts, for example there was no reference to diseases such as prostate cancer, or behaviours such as the "risk-taking man"; they didn't want to focus on men's problems [25]. That corresponds with the international literature. The WHO definition of health was placed in the definition process underlying and consulted the scientific literature from Germany.

A good basis for finding a definition came from the definition of "Health" by Klaus Hurrelmann [26] from 2010: "Health is a state of objective and subjective well-being of a person, which has been achieved if this person is in the physical, mental and social aspects of his development in accordance with its own capabilities and goals of the given external life conditions." In his understanding, which builds a bridge to the interdisciplinary-oriented health sciences, health is a pleasant and not at all self-evident state of equilibrium of risk and protective factors, which is always found again at any life stage in question. Exceeding that balance means that life and joy can be increased. A productive development of own skills and performance potential is possible, and it increases the willingness toward social integration and engagement [26].

The German Society for Man and Health delimited "Men's Health" with the following description

in 2010: “Men’s health is an individual and a social issue. Therefore, it means addressing the individual man and conferring him with the responsibility for his own health and to strengthen him regarding his perception thereof. But it is also about the living conditions of the men in our society. These must be clarified, related problems must be identified and solutions addressed. Only a balanced relationship between addressing individual and social conditions is appropriate, allowing the discussion of men’s health to be brought forward”[27].

The field of men’s health has evolved tediously and very selectively in Germany. Priorities have been until now based on “man diseases” and “problems with the ‘sexual health’”. Therefore, it was particularly important to define men’s health to develop a publicly accepted understanding of men’s health. Only a comprehensive definition of men’s health can help to establish a reasonable consideration by the public and in health policy. The reference of the new definition of men’s health to the WHO’s definition of health is shown in the second paragraph. But in addition, the proposal includes the balance of risk and protective factors of the individual. The health scientist Hurrelmann rightly pointed out in the definition of “Health” [26] the necessary balance of risk and protective factors that we have referred to.

Furthermore, the collective responsibility is emphasised. It is not effective to solely focus on initiatives aimed exclusively at the individual subjects, as the health of men incorporates the importance of family, factory and intermediary institutions. This corresponds to the definition of men’s health by the Men’s Health Forum (England), which discussed improvements in men’s health on an individual and population level [3]. Also, consensus with the newly initiated discussion is signalled in the WHO European Health Report 2012 to the meaning of well-being in the new public health context, i.e. the State responsibility for health and welfare [28].

The “old” definition of Men’s Health of the Men’s Health Foundation Berlin [29] said that men have very different ideas over men’s health.

The idea of individual wishes and ideas that had already been included in the previous definition of “Men’s Health”, should therefore not only find its

way into the new definition. Rather, this corresponds with the individualisation of the *curricula vitae* and other tendencies of post-modern societies, to which health policy must be set.

The definition of Men’s Health published until 2011 by Wiggershaus - Skriboleit disagreed [19] with other definitions of Men’s Health in Germany, as it gave a positive image of men’s health in a normative way. The definition was replaced by a second definition up to the year 2014 [20], however, this has also been recently removed from the website [21].

A comparison with a German definition of women’s health was not performed because in the report on the health situation of women in Germany [30], although women’s and men’s health are delineated on the health situation of women in Germany there is no actual definition of women’s health provided.

The German Society for Man and Health [27] emphasised the influence of social conditions on the health of the individual, which were taken into account in the final definition of men’s health.

With this definition, there is an expanded definition of men’s health, which includes individual, partnership and collective responsibility for men’s health.

It can serve as a basis for further research and concrete action on this issue. A comprehensive definition of men’s health should include the various concepts of masculinity and diversity of masculinities with the dimensions of age, class, ethnicity, sexual identity, education, philosophy/religion. These aspects have been identified by the group of experts in the subject catalogue for a definition of men’s health, returned in the selection of the criteria for the time being. But these criteria should serve as a basis for further research on men’s health.

MNEMONICS

With this publication we want to help:

- Advance the discussion about men’s health worldwide and especially in Germany.
- Find a definition of men’s health, which corresponds to the current knowledge -stand and the specific needs of men.

A definition of men’s health is the basis for action plans in order to improve the health situation of men,

especially for reducing premature mortality and disability and increase their life expectancy and include prevention, health care, influencing behaviour and social differentiation.

CONCLUSIONS

The public health relevance of the proposed definition of “Men’s Health” is to set the salutogenic approach on health potentials of men in the centre of a definition in order to set up on this basis “Action Plans for Men’s Health” to improve the health situation of men.

The definition of “Men’s Health” is published on the website of the Foundation of Men’s Health Berlin; it is the basis for the continuation of scientific discussion.

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